PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now that summer's end is here, what is the proper protective program for our Hibiscus plants? Just how can they be inhibited from cold damage? Of course there are temperatures that are beyond our ability to cope with. However, the suggestions I have to offer are those that have proven effective in our area, (Putnam County) which is rather to the north and probably has to have better than average protection.

Come fall, I find it profitable, from the standpoint of plant health to give an overall application of some good spray. I use Emo-Nik, which is a Nicotine Emulsion. Within a few days after cleaning up the plant, I work the soil around the plant, removing all grass and weeds, which gives proper areation. Next, I cover the root area with Hybrotite, distributed evenly on the soil and worked in lightly. I use five pounds per plant. I then bank the plant with a high bank of dirt. If you are sure you will be able to beat the cold wave, when you hear one is on the way, the bank does not need to be made at this time, but for top protection it must be there before freezing temperatures. If the part of the plant extending above the bank becomes frozen or bitten it should be cut back to the bank immediately, in order that the damage does not travel down through the sap of the plant. Hybrotite is powdered granite, which contains many of the trace elements of plant food. In citrus it has been found very effective even in low grownd. Many of the properties, not found in our light, sandy Florida soils, are supplied through this medium.

It has given me great satisfaction to have been able to attend all of the Hibiscus Shows, except that of Tropical Chapter, whith I missed because of illness. In spite of the very great damage from cold generally, the bloom has been of excellent quality. Also, it is noted with pleasure that show technique is also improving. They have been better planned and better displayed, it seems to me. I wish to give each Chapter a very warm and friendly pat on the back for the many attributes of showmanship they have acquired. Also, the wonderful fellowship that is in

evidence in all of the Chapters. To me, this is quite as wonderful as all of the wonderful flowers.

This is especially gratifying because the American Hibiscus Society, as a group is growing in stature. Recognition is coming from persons and groups that can have a tremenduous influence on our organization as a whole. I anticipate that our society will, in the not too distant future, be invited to participate in some of the big shows, such as the International, and many others. This will call for proper technique in display as well as good bloom. Therefore, we should all strive to acquire the proper method of handling bloom as is required in such shows and as is practiced by top-flight floral societies. There are accepted ways of handling and displaying flowers, as used in the floral business. We should learn the way to do the things that we will have to know, to become an invited participant in such floral extravaganzas as the big shows are today.

- S. L. Shepard

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